

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

REGION 1

1 CONGRESS STREET, SUITE 1100
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02114-2023

July 8, 2003

Honorable John C. Rowland
State of Connecticut
Executive Chambers
Hartford, CT 06106OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

Dear Governor Rowland:

Thank you for your letter of June 24, 2003 forwarding Connecticut's recommendations on air quality designations for the national health based standard for ground-level ozone, a major constituent of smog. As you know, breathing ozone and fine particles can cause serious respiratory and cardiovascular effects. Many health studies have correlated increased exposure to fine particles with increases in premature death. In 1997, EPA revised its national ambient air quality standards for these two pollutants. After prevailing in a lengthy court battle, we are now working with States to take the steps necessary to protect the public from these pollutants. Your letter is an important step toward providing citizens in your state with critical information about air pollution levels in their community.

We intend to carefully review the recommendations and work with your Department of Environmental Protection as necessary in determining final designations. The EPA must make its final official designations decisions for ozone by April 15, 2004. For the fine particle standards, States are to make these recommendations by February 2004, and the Agency will make its final decisions by December 15, 2004.

Once EPA officially designates an area as not meeting one of these air quality standards, your State will be required to develop and submit to EPA a plan for cleaning up the air in those designated nonattainment areas. These plans will be due no later than three years after the date that an area is designated as nonattainment. The level of emission control programs and the dates for achieving clean air in your nonattainment areas will vary depending upon the severity of the problem.

We hope that you will encourage the communities in your State to take early actions to improve their air quality. My staff and I stand ready to help your State and communities identify pollution control measures that could be implemented to help clean the air. We will also work with other affected States and Tribes to take necessary steps to reduce air pollution. In addition, our analysis shows that the Clear Skies legislation introduced in Congress in 2002 would reduce the long-range transport of ozone and fine particles and result in wide-spread improvement in air quality.

(17-918-1010

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We look forward to working with Connecticut in the coming months on designations. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me or David Conroy, Manager of the Air Quality Planning Unit at (617) 918-1661.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Varney
Regional Administrator

cc: Ann Gobin, DEP
Chris James, DEP
Art Rocque, DEP